

# It's wrightfully theirs <sup>DRHS</sup>

## Town officially opens the doors to the Wright Building

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In the warm sun and blue skies of the last day of summer, town officials, state representatives, and new tenants gathered on the lawn of the Wright Building as the town officially opened its doors to the public.

"We have been waiting for this for a long time," master of ceremonies Andre Martecchini said. "As chairman of the Board of Selectmen I am very proud to be here, this is a culmination of many years of hard work and a lot of people."

Proposals for the Wright Building began mulling back in 2003, five years later the vision that so many of its supporters had for the building finally came together. Martecchini said when the town was first trying to decide what to do with the building it had been vacant for a few years after the library moved into a new location, there was talk of restoring it, and of tearing it down. The original idea for the building, donated to the town by Georgian Wright in 1907, was to use it for educational and historical purposes. When the town decided to restore the building the Community Preservation Committee got involved in preserving the building and finding the rightful tenants.

The entire renovation project cost \$3 million, chairwoman of the CPC Holly Morris said, half of which came from the town, the other half came from the state matching grant. The building is a prime example of what the CPC is really worth, she said. "The Wright



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*People check out the Rural and Historical Society's Drew library, restored back to its original 1907 look.*

Building stands as a testament to Duxbury's commitment," she said. On one side there is a youth center, on the other a historical archive library, "together they honor both our vitality while preserving our past."

Director of the Rural and Historical Society Patrick Browne said the society was looking for a place for their archives, which were scattered in various places throughout the town, when the Wright building became available. Part of their intent was not only to use the space for archives, but also in the preservation of history by returning the library back to its original 1907 look. The restoration not only created space for archival papers, it also included a research library, space for town archives and room to store historical paintings and prints. Browne added one of the greatest features in the Drew library is the fully climate-controlled archive room.

"This project has literally been Dream come true for us," Browne said.

As Martecchini introduced the speakers from the Duxbury Student Union Association (DSUA) he mentioned the commitment and work that went into creating their center, "they have been very persistent and had to work very, very, hard to make this a reality," he said. From the beginning the DSUA envisioned the center as a safe place for teens to go after school and on the weekends. Martecchini recalled how the center became a focal point for kids in dealing with the recent tragedy that occurred in town, "This to me is it, this is what it is all about," he said.

President of the Duxbury Student Union Association Steve Jones pointed to a button pinned to his shirt; a button he said was five years old. He said the student union started five years ago in 2003 with articles 19, 20 and 21 on the Town Meeting warrant. "I thought it would get easier, but it kept getting harder," Jones said. The center has been fully operational since the start of the

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school year, partnering with Crossroads for Kids; they have hired a director and staff to aid in running the center successfully. He said they had a goal of 250 memberships in the first year, and already have 245.

The partnership between the student union and Crossroads formulated almost naturally out of Crossroads commitment to kids and commitment in the town through Camp Wing. They have been running camps in Duxbury for 72 years. Crossroads for Kids Executive Director Deb Donohoe said she and Sue Bradford, the group's director of communications and development, thought the youth center was a great match for Crossroads, and a great way to create new programs in Duxbury.

"We're the best kept secret in town, and we're thrilled to be involved in the student union," Donohoe said. "We bring a lot of experience and leadership."

Under the direction of Student Union Director Josh Donohoe, five high school students, who participated in the leadership program over the summer, will act as student leaders for the program throughout the year. The youths help out by creating weekend activities such as open mic night and movie night on Friday

evenings, creating Facebook group pages where students can go for information, and helping during the open hours throughout the year.

"To create a safe environment for students to socialize, be involved and active in the way the center runs, and to learn responsibility," Donohoe said of what he envisions for the center.

Many of the high school students became leaders because they believe the student union can be a great place to go after school to socialize, relax and hang out in a safe environment. Before the student union many kids would go to the library after school before sports or if they were waiting for a ride. The library is a quiet place for research and study, the student union allows a place for socialization, as well as study.

"People can come and be able to get together after school. School is very stressful, this is a relaxing environment for kids to go be together, keep kids out of trouble, and it's fun," DHS junior Jessica Lizza, 16, said.

The majority of students taking full advantage of the center are middle school students. Senior Chris Angeles, 17, said one of their goals is to attract more high school students to the center; however, many high school stu-





PHOTO COURTESY JEFF PURLEY

*People gather outside a tent waiting for the official town opening of the Wright Building.*

dents play sports, work after school jobs, or do other activities, which makes it harder for them to come to the center. Middle school leaders Isabella Catanzariti and Emily Shane said

the center is fun place for them to go after school, hangout, talk, do homework, play games and not have to worry about being quiet. "The library was quiet, here we can be louder, talk, socialize, it is

really great place for kids to come after school," Isabella said.

As the many groups involved in the inner working of the Wright Building came together, Tom Daley Director of Public Works was responsible for the construction part of the project from the town side. In what he said was one of the most chal-

lenging projects he has ever had to work on, the official opening of the building was a long time coming, and big relief. "It's surreal," Daley said. "I am very pleased with how it turned out, it has been a great effort by all, I have to thank my wife for helping to keep my sanity through this."